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Berry Gordy, Carol Publishing Author Sue and Counter-sue

In August 1991, Berry Gordy Jr. filed a $100 million lawsuit against author J. Randy Taraborrelli and Carol Publishing, the publisher of *Michael Jackson: The Magic and the Madness*, for libel and invasion of privacy. One year to the day after Gordy announced the filing of his lawsuit, Taraborrelli filed a $200 million lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against the founder of Motown for libel and slander, stemming from alleged inflammatory remarks made by Gordy about the author at a press conference. Diana Ross has already been subpoenaed for deposition and it is expected that other Motown stars will be subpoenaed during the coming months.

Helen Marcus

***Berry Gordy** denies 'vicious' allegations.*

Regarding the original lawsuit, Steve Schragis, publisher of Carol Publishing, says, "I have never seen such a ridiculous lawsuit. Randy Taraborrelli is the most scrupulous researcher I've ever met. The clauses cited in Gordy's lawsuit are not libelous—they're true, and can be backed up by Randy's tapes, documents and computer records. However, Gordy's lawsuit has been tough on Randy. Gordy has said things that could be damaging to Randy's career. I might add that it costs a lot of money to litigate against Berry Gordy."

The original Gordy lawsuit is in the discovery stages, with a court date yet to be set. Barry Langberg, Gordy's attorney, said: "There have been many [derogatory] statements made over the years. Taraborrelli's book is a more vicious conglomeration of lies than we had seen before. People can write about public figures as long as there isn't malice and we're going to prove that there was malice."

Gordy's complaint lists 22 causes of action, including alleged comments that Gordy was "a soft-hearted pimp who felt sorry for the prostitutes working for him," and that he "customarily lied" to his recording artists about their sales figures. Also included are alleged incidents and statements involving several of the record label's stars, including Diana Ross, the Temptations and Marvin Gaye, that show Gordy in an unflattering light.

Taraborrelli's lawsuit, on the other hand, alleges that Gordy's comments made during his press conference in 1991 have subjected the author to embarrassment, ridicule and contempt, and cast doubt on his credibility as a nonfiction writer.

At a press conference announcing his lawsuit, Taraborrelli said, "Gordy is suing me for merely re-stating comments and recollections made by those who have lived the full gamut of Motown experiences—good and bad. Why hasn't he sued them?" Taraborrelli points out that Gordy's ex-wife allegedly made the "pimp" comment on national television and in her own book.

Taraborrelli has penned three other Motown-inspired titles, including *Call Her Miss Ross*, *Diana* and *Motown—Hot Wax, City Cool and Solid Gold*.

The mass market edition of *Michael Jackson*, which sold 75,000 copies in hardcover, has been released by Ballantine with the passages in question deleted. According to Schragis, Ballantine didn't want to be involved in the lawsuit and, at the time, Taraborrelli saw the deletion as a positive gesture. —L.S.

AAP Sales Report for June

Category	% change, June*	% change, YTD
Adult hardcover	127.4	17.1
Adult paperback	49.7	14.5
Juvenile hardcover	18.3	8.9
Juvenile paperback	29.2	1.2
Univ. pr. hardcover	-6.3	-7.7
Univ. pr. paperback	11.2	10.2
Bibles, etc.	110.5	8.8
Mass market paperback	35.0	-4.1
Book club	4.2	-1.2
Mail order	-9.5	-19.1
Sci-tech	20.5	13.0
College texts	13.7	12.2
School texts	2.9	-3.7

**Percent changes measured against same time periods, 1991*

Out of Line

by Mort Gerberg

"On the other hand, Mel, it's much more than they do for most of their books."

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